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Rep. Paul Robertson
Rep. Mara Candelaria-Reardon
Rep. Robert Behning
Rep. Timothy Harris
Rep. Jeff Thompson
Sen. Teresa Lubbers, Vice-Chairperson
Sen. Ron Alting
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Sen. Richard Young
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Sen. Timothy Skinner



INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION MATTERS

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MEETING MINUTES¹

Meeting Date: September 13, 2007
Meeting Time: 1:00 P.M.
Meeting Place: State House, 200 W. Washington St., 404
Meeting City: Indianapolis, Indiana
Meeting Number: 3

Members Present: Rep. Greg Porter, Chairperson; Rep. Paul Robertson; Rep. Robert Behning; Rep. Jeff Thompson; Sen. Teresa Lubbers, Vice-Chairperson; Sen. Ron Alting; Sen. Jeff Drozda; Sen. Richard Young; Sen. Connie Sipes; Sen. Timothy Skinner.

Members Absent: Rep. Mara Candelaria-Reardon; Rep. Timothy Harris.

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 1:14 PM and introduced the members present since the meeting was being webcast.

Teacher Recruitment and Retention

Chairman Porter called on Dean Gerardo Gonzalez from the Indiana University School of Education and Dean Roy Weaver from the Ball State University School of Education to discuss teachers' preparation at their colleges. Dr. Gonzales presented some prepared remarks (Attachment A) that pertained to the Education Schools at Bloomington and IUPUI. He stated that based on research evidence, teacher quality is the most important school-based factor affecting student achievement. The Indiana University School of Education has aligned their teacher preparation curricula with state and national standards to prepare highly qualified teachers. While other Indiana University schools generally require a 2.0 GPA overall for admission, the School of Education requires a 2.5 GPA and passage of the Praxis I test. It is

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recommended that students take the Praxis I test as a freshman or as soon as the student decides to major in education.

Indiana University has a large network of partner schools and practicing teachers who work with students to provide classroom experiences as soon as possible. After graduation, teachers continue their professional development with the School of Education through graduate courses, distance learning, summer institutes, and workshops. Despite the challenges of teaching, a majority of graduates were still teaching two to six years after graduation (72% full-time, 5% part-time, and 5% substitute teaching). Other than personal reasons, the primary reasons that teachers give for leaving teaching are poor salaries and poor working conditions.

The School of Education is funded as part of the total university budget and submits budgets like other schools in the university. Dr. Gonzales stated that it is not a “cash cow” for any other academic program. The education programs at Indiana University are ranked among the best in the country.

Dr. Roy Weaver stated that Ball State University had admission standards similar to Indiana University and that content area courses are taught outside the School of Education. Students with an education degree may take more content courses than students with the area degree. The laboratory school, Muncie Burris, allows a student to have classroom experience as a freshman.

Dr. Weaver discussed the Ball State Professional Development School. The faculty spends about one day each week at schools, including urban schools. Today, it is essential that an assigned regular classroom teacher is present in the classroom every day of the 16-week student teacher experience. The university also encourages students to get a substitute teaching license so they can substitute teach during breaks.

The committee asked if it was possible for a student to get to their senior year in college without passing Praxis I. Dr. Gonzales stated that in the past that was possible, but at Indiana University - Bloomington the student has to pass Praxis I to be admitted to the School of Education.

The committee commented that the school curriculums have changed over the years due to ISTEP testing and the federal No Child Left Behind law and that it is sometimes difficult for an experienced teacher to deal with the dramatic curriculum changes. The committee also stated that sometimes college instructors are out of touch with what is happening in the classroom.

The committee asked if the schools of education survey graduates to ascertain if the graduates were well prepared and what areas of preparation could be improved. One member commented that when she asked graduates what their weaknesses were that they generally mention discipline and teaching literacy. Dr. Gonzales said that they had conducted a survey of graduates and have implemented some suggestions. Most students do express a concern with classroom management. Dr. Gonzales stated that the university is also in the process of doing a survey of employers. Dr. Weaver said that a survey of graduates is required for accreditation of the programs.

The committee asked about the importance of obtaining a master's degree. The current salary schedules in schools provide additional pay for obtaining a master's degree, but not for continuing education courses. Dr. Gonzales stated that a master's degree does improve learning, but continuing education is very important.

Chairman Porter stated his concern about the recruitment and retention of qualified teachers and the Praxis I and II tests, including potential biases against minorities. The process needs to be inclusive for all students.

During the last committee meeting, the committee requested some additional information from the Department of Education. Jeff Zaring had provided the requested information (Attachments B through E) in advance of the meeting and was available for questions.

Sally Sloan, Indiana Federation of Teachers, also provided additional information on the relationship of teachers and school corporations with Schools of Professional Development (Attachment F).

Issues pertaining to Juvenile Education within the Department of Correction

Chairman Porter called on Tim Brown, Legislative Liaison for the Department of Correction (DOC). Mr. Brown introduced John Nally, Education Director, and Susan Lockwood, Title I Director, to discuss juvenile education in the DOC. The education requirements in DOC are set up under state law and match up with the standards of public schools. The department has six goals.

1. Provide credit recovery and alternative schools.
2. Improve primary literacy. (Currently, average literacy is below 6th grade when entering facilities.)
3. Provide instruction for taking the GED to obtain a diploma.
4. Provide career and vocational skills.
5. Provide transition back to public schools.
6. Comply with special education requirements.

The department is currently working under a settlement agreement with the federal Department of Justice.

Mr. Nally provided a handout (Attachment G) comparing the educational costs in DOC facilities with public schools in the area of the facility and an overview of the state program. The committee had some questions on the comparison of costs and whether capital costs were included in the department's figures for schools and not the facilities. The committee commented that the per student costs for DOC are similar to public schools if capital and transportation costs are removed. Education programs at DOC are budgeted as part of the overall budget and not funded in the school formula like public schools. The committee commented that maybe some of the school formula money should follow the student if they are placed in DOC facility during the school year.

Mr. Nally stated that DOC has some special challenges with providing instruction. The population is highly mobile. Students are admitted anytime, may be released at anytime, and many times the students are behind where they should be in their development. Due to turnover, different students take the tests each year so comparison from year to year is difficult. A juvenile that should be in 9th or 10th grade may have a functional literacy at 6th grade level when they enter the system. The ISTEP passing rates are substantially under the statewide averages for this reason. Attachment H provides a comparison of the ISTEP pass rate for DOC with the state average. The department also has had problems providing related services for special need students. Generally, an individual contract with a service provider is required to provide services. DOC is in the process of evaluating and changing their vocational education programs and is working with the Department of Workforce

Development. Access to technology for vocational education and general education is a challenge.

Senator Lubbers distributed a higher education resolution (Attachment I) that could be considered in the final report.

The next meeting of the committee was scheduled for October 10 at 1:00 PM in Room 404 of the State House.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:56 PM.